N 536 - Utilization of Nursing Research in Advanced Practice, Summer 2008

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Research Design

Contributors
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Design Characteristics

- Maximizes control over factors to increase the validity of the findings
- Guides the researcher in planning and implementing a study
Level of Control: Quantitative Research

- Descriptive
- Correlational
- Quasi-experimental
- Experimental

Increased Control with Design
Concepts Relevant to Research Design (1)

**Causality**

A \[ \rightarrow \] B
Pressure \[ \rightarrow \] Ulcer

**Multicausality**

Years smoking  \[ \rightarrow \] Heart disease
High fat diet \[ \rightarrow \] Heart disease
Limited exercise \[ \rightarrow \] Heart disease
Concepts Relevant to Research Design (2)

- Probability: Likelihood of an outcome
- Bias: Slanting findings
- Manipulation: Treatment
- Control: All phases of design
Design Validity

- Measure of accuracy of a study

- Examined with critique of the following dimensions:
  - Statistical conclusion validity
  - Internal validity
  - Construct validity
  - External validity
Elements of a Strong Research Design (1)

- Controlling the environment of the study setting

- Levels of controlling:
  - Natural setting
  - Partially controlled setting: e.g., clinics
  - Highly controlled setting: e.g., laboratory
Elements of a Strong Research Design (2)

- Controlling the equivalence of subjects and groups
  - Random subject selection
  - Random assignment to groups
Elements of a Strong Research Design (3)

- Controlling the treatment
  - Choose a treatment based on research and practice
  - Develop a protocol for implementation
  - Document the implemented treatment
  - Use a check-list to determine the extent of completeness to which the treatment was implemented
  - Evaluate the treatment during the study
Elements of a Strong Research Design (4)

- Controlling measurement
  - Reliability
  - Validity
  - Number of measurement methods
  - Types of instruments
Elements of a Strong Research Design (5)

- **Controlling extraneous variables**
  - Identify and eliminate extraneous variables via sample criteria, choice of settings, or research design
  - Random sampling
  - Sample: Heterogenous, homogeneous, or matching
  - Statistical control
Problems with Study Designs

- Inappropriate for the study purpose or the research framework
- Poorly developed designs
- The research methods were poorly implemented
- Inadequate treatment, sample, or measurement methods
Selecting a Design

Is there a treatment?

Yes

Is the treatment tightly controlled by the researcher?

No

Yes

Is the primary purpose examination of relationships?

No

Yes

Descriptive Design

Will the sample be studied as a single group?

No

Yes

Quasi-Experimental Study

Will a randomly assigned control group be used?

No

Yes

Is the original sample randomly selected?

No

Yes

Experimental Study

Correlational Design
Selecting a Descriptive Design

Examine sequences across time?

- Yes
  - Data collected across time?
    - Yes
      - Single unit of study
      - Case Study
    - No
      - Studying events partitioned across time?
        - Yes
          - Longitudinal Study
        - No
          - Cross-sectional design
          - Trend Analysis

- No
  - One Group?
    - Yes
      - Repeated measures of each subject
    - No
      - Cross-sectional design with treatment partitioning
      - Longitudinal design with treatment partitioning
A Typical Descriptive Design

Clarification ➔ Measurement ➔ Description ➔ Interpretation

Phenomenon of Interest

- Variable 1
- Variable 2
- Variable 3
- Variable 4

Description of Variable 1
Description of Variable 2
Description of Variable 3
Description of Variable 4

Interpretation of Meaning
Development of Hypotheses
A Comparative Descriptive Design

Group I
{variables measured}

Describe

Comparison of Groups on Selected Variables

Interpretation of Meaning

Development of Hypotheses

Group II
{variables measured}
Selecting the Type of Correlational Design

- **Describe relationships between/among variables?**
  - Descriptive correlational design

- **Predict relationships between/among variables?**
  - Predictive correlational design

- **Test theoretically proposed Relationships?**
  - Model testing design
A Predictive Design

Value of Intercept + Value of Independent Variable 1 + Value of Independent Variable 2 = Predicted Value of Dependent Variable
Selecting The Type of Quasi-Experimental Design

- Control Group?
  - Yes
    - Pretest?
      - No
        - One-group post-test only design
      - Yes
        - Repeated Measures?
          - No
            - Strategy for Comparison
              - No
                - Suggest Reevaluating design
              - Yes
                - Compare treatment & control conditions?
          - Yes
            - Compare treatment & control conditions?
Selecting The Type of Experimental Design

- **Pretest**
  - No: Post-test only control group design
  - Yes: Repeated Measurements?
    - No: Examine effects of confounding variables?
      - No: Multiple sites?
        - No: Pretest/post-test control group design
        - Yes: Randomized clinical trials
      - Yes: Blocking?
        - No: Comparison of multiple levels of treatment
          - No: Examination of complex relationships among variables in relation to treatment
          - Yes: Nested Designs
        - Yes: Randomized Block Design
  - Yes: Repeated measures design
Pretest-Post Test, Control Group Designs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Randomly selected experimental group</th>
<th>Randomly selected control group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measurement of dependent variables</td>
<td>Measurement of dependent variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation of independent variables</td>
<td>Manipulation of independent variables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Randomly selected experimental group**: PRETEST → TREATMENT → POST-TEST
- **Randomly selected control group**: PRETEST → POST-TEST

**Treatment**: Under control of researcher

**Findings**:
- Comparison of pretest and post-test scores
- Comparison of experimental and control groups
- Comparison of pretest-post-test differences between samples

**Example**: Your self (1990). The impact of group reminiscence counseling on a depressed elderly population.

**Uncontrolled threats to validity**:
- Testing
- Mortality

**Instrumentation**: Restricted generalizability as control increases
## Post-Test-Only Control Group Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement of independent variables</th>
<th>Measurement of dependent variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Randomly selected experimental group</td>
<td>TREATMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomly selected control group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Treatment:** Under control of researcher  

**Findings:** Comparison of experimental and control groups  


**Uncontrolled threats to validity:** Instrumentation, Mortality, Limited generalizability as control increases
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pain Control Management</th>
<th>Primary Nursing Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional care</strong></td>
<td>Unit A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRN Medication</strong></td>
<td>Unit A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New approach: “Around the clock” medication</strong></td>
<td>Unit A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Design
Advantages of Experimental Designs

- More controls in design and conducting a study
- Increased internally validity
  - Decreased threats to design validity
- Fewer rival hypotheses
Advantages of Quasi-Experimental Designs

- More practical
  - Ease of implementation
- More feasible
  - Resources, subjects, time, setting
- More generalizable
  - Comparable to practice
Developing the Design Section of Your Proposal

- Identify the design
  - Name it specifically

- Provide a map of the design
- Discuss your rationale for using this design
- Describe threats to the validity of the chosen design